

Title	Empty Home Policy
Document Owner	Director of Home Maintenance Services
Approval	Policy Group, November 2016
Next Review Date	November 2019
Corporate Aim	Create great neighbourhoods where people and communities flourish

1 PURPOSE AND AIMS

- 1.1 whg aims to support customers to sustain their tenancies and minimise the turnover of homes.
- 1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure empty homes are made tenant ready and brought back into management as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 1.2 Empty homes can have a detrimental impact on our neighbourhoods and the environment, as they can quickly fall into disrepair and become a target for vandalism / theft and anti-social behaviour and become problematic for neighbours.
- 1.4 Bringing empty homes back into management as quickly as possible maximises their social value to communities and prospective customers. It also ensures we maximise our rental income.

2 POLICY

- 2.1 When a home becomes empty an inspection will be carried out to ensure that the services are safe so that colleagues can assess the home for any repairs.
- 2.2 Where a home is in a vulnerable area due to vandalism and theft, security alarms and screens will be installed and access will only be available once the alarms have been de-activated.
- 2.3 When a home has been assessed it will be categorised as either requiring 'Major' or 'Minor' works or placed 'Under Review' due to substantial investment requirements.
- 2.4 A 'Major' void is classified as requiring extensive repairs and will require a major component replacing such as a kitchen / bathroom / rewire / heating / roof to ensure that it complies with the Decent Homes Standard.
- 2.5 A 'Minor' void requires works to bring it back into management to meet the standard, but may require a component replacing within the following 6 months and will be included onto the next available programme of works.
- 2.6 A home placed 'Under Review' will have an appraisal carried out to determine whether retaining the home is viable considering the cost of works required, the potential future returns and the impact on the community.

- 2.7 All homes will have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) available for any prospective customer to view the typical energy use and costs. The certificate will rate the home using a scale of A-G where 'A' is the most energy efficient.
- 2.8 This Policy will ensure that all homes meet a minimum standard and comply with all legal health and safety requirements when they are let.
- 2.9 When a decision has been made to demolish a home, a timetable will have been drawn up from the time a customer leaves until the demolition date. During this period we will ensure that the home has its services capped off and that the windows / doors are boarded up and secure.
- 2.10 Through the appraisal process for 'Under Review' homes, occasionally it may be the decision of the Group to dispose of the home, this will be decided by the Capital Development Appraisal Panel (CDAP) and will consider the cost of works required and its desirability within the neighbourhood.

3. PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS

- 3.1 Performance against key performance indicators will be reported quarterly to the Customer Services Committee. We will also benchmark our performance with peers on an annual basis.
- 3.2 Where an appraisal determines that it is no longer viable to retain a home, a business case will be taken to CDAP to seek approval for disposal.

4. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 4.1 This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is significant change.

5. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES

Asset Management Strategy
Allocations Policy

Decent Homes Standard
European Union Directive 2002/91/EC
Housing Act 2004
The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007
Gas Safety (installations and use) regulations 1998
Electricity at work regulations 1989
BS-7671: 2008 (wiring regulations)